STATUS OF *MORUS MURRAYANA* (MORACEAE)

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ABSTRACT

A reexamination of *Morus murrayana* with more individuals from a wider geographic range, coupled with an additional molecular marker, has led to the conclusion that *M. murrayana* should be revised as ***M. rubra var. murrayana***. Leaf vein patterns are shown to be a much more accurate character for species delineation between *M. rubra* and *M. alba* than the commonly used comparisons of leaf pubescence, as verified by DNA-identified individuals. *Phytologia 94(2): 245-252 (August 1, 2012).*

KEY WORDS: Moraceae, mulberry, *Morus*, vars. *murrayana*, *rubra*, *alba*, Kentucky, internal transcribed spacer, ITS, *trn*L-F

Morus murrayana D.E. Saar & S.J. Galla (Murray State's Mulberry) was named (Galla et al., 2009) based on unique morphological characters and sequences from nuclear DNA (internal transcribed spacer region (ITS) of nuclear ribosomal DNA (nrDNA)). Distinctions between native *M. rubra* L. (Red Mulberry) and the invasive, non-native *M. alba* L. (White Mulberry) continue to be blurred due to the almost exclusive use of pubescence as the diagnostic character in plant keys (e.g., Jones, 2005; Mohlenbrock, 2002; Wunderlin, 1997; Swink & Wilhelm, 1994; Gleason & Cronquist, 1991; Elias, 1987; Radford et al., 1968; Steyermark, 1963; Britton & Brown, 1913). *M. alba* is a highly variable species, even within its native range in Asia (Chen Renfang, Southwest University, China, pers. com. to DES). This variability includes leaf pubescence, with the result